

Please add claims 6-23 as follows:

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c1*

6. An absorbent article, comprising

a liquid-permeable topsheet; and

a liquid-absorbent core having an upper surface covered by said topsheet and a lower surface, said core further having indented regions arranged along two lines extending longitudinally along transversely opposite sides of said core, said lines spaced apart from each other by a distance gradually increasing from a minimum at a longitudinally middle point thereof to a maximum at longitudinally opposite ends thereof, the indented regions longitudinally dividing said core into a central region confined between the indented regions and two side regions each located between one of the indented regions and the respective one of the transversely opposite sides of said core;

wherein said core contains a fibrous component and a density of the fibrous component in the indented regions is equal to or lower than in the central and side regions.

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7. The article of claim 6, wherein the indented regions continuously extend along said lines.

8. The article of claim 6, wherein the indented regions intermittently extend along said lines.

9. The article of claim 6, wherein a rigidity of said core in the indented regions is not higher than in the central and side regions.

10. The article of claim 6, wherein said core further contains super-absorptive polymer particles distributed substantially only in the central region.

11. The article of claim 6, wherein said core comprises a plurality of indentations

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arranged along each of said lines, each indentation having side walls extending from an opening formed on the upper surface toward the lower surface and ending at a bottom, portions of said core sandwiched between the bottom and the lower surface defining the indented regions.

Sub C2 12. The article of claim 11, wherein the side walls are tapered toward the bottom.

13. The article of claim 11, wherein the openings of the indentations arranged successively along each of said lines are spaced.

14. The article of claim 11, wherein the openings of the indentations arranged successively along each of said lines are contiguous so that to form at least two grooves each extending along one of said lines.

15. The article of claim 14, wherein each of the grooves extends for substantially an entire length of the respective line.

16. The article of claim 15, wherein the grooves intersect in the vicinity of the longitudinally middle point of said lines.

17. The article of claim 14, wherein each a depth of at least one of the grooves gradually decreases from the longitudinally middle point of the respective line toward the longitudinally opposite ends thereof.

18. The article of claim 11, wherein said topsheet includes a plurality of indented portions each conforming in shape with one of the indentations and received within a space defined by the side walls and bottom of the respective indentation.

19. The article of claim 11, wherein said topsheet spans over the openings of the indentations without being partially received within spaces defined by the side walls and bottoms of the indentations.

20. The article of claim 6, wherein said lines intersect in the vicinity of the longitudinally middle point thereof.

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C3* 21. The article of claim 6, wherein at least one of the side regions of said core has a thickness gradually decreasing toward the respective transversely opposite side of said core.

22. The article of claim 6, wherein the central and side regions of said core have substantially the same thickness.

23. The article of claim 6, further comprising a liquid-impermeable backsheet covering the lower surface of said core and bonded to said topsheet. --
